



**DRIVEN BY “LIKES” AND
“SELFIES”: THE IMPACT OF
SOCIAL MEDIA ON
ADOLESCENTS & YOUNG
ADULTS**

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OBJECTIVES

1. Articulate some of the prevailing trends in social media in adolescents and young adults
2. Identify the psychological effects of social media usage
3. Discuss the impact of social media use on relationships and interpersonal functioning
4. Demonstrate tools to help clients become savvy consumers of media

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA ANYWAY?

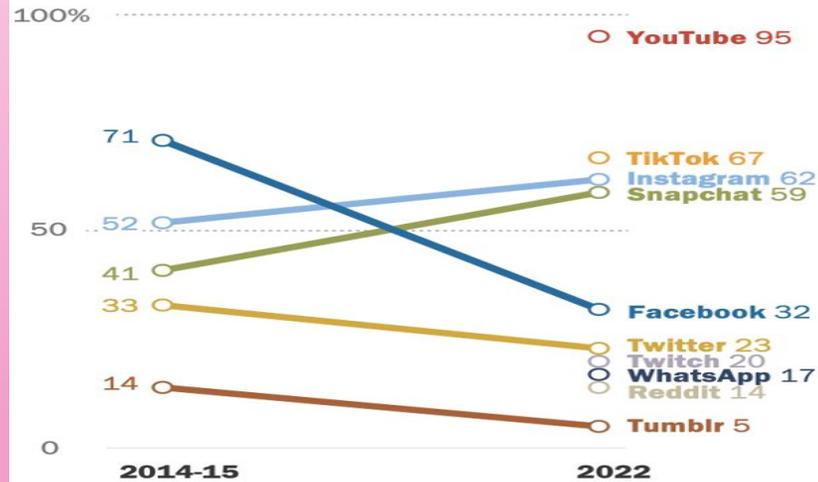
According to Merriam Webster, **Social Media** is defined as “forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)”



HOW BIG OF A DEAL IS THIS?

Since 2014-15, TikTok has arisen; Facebook usage has dropped; Instagram, Snapchat have grown

% of U.S. teens who say they ever use any of the following apps or sites



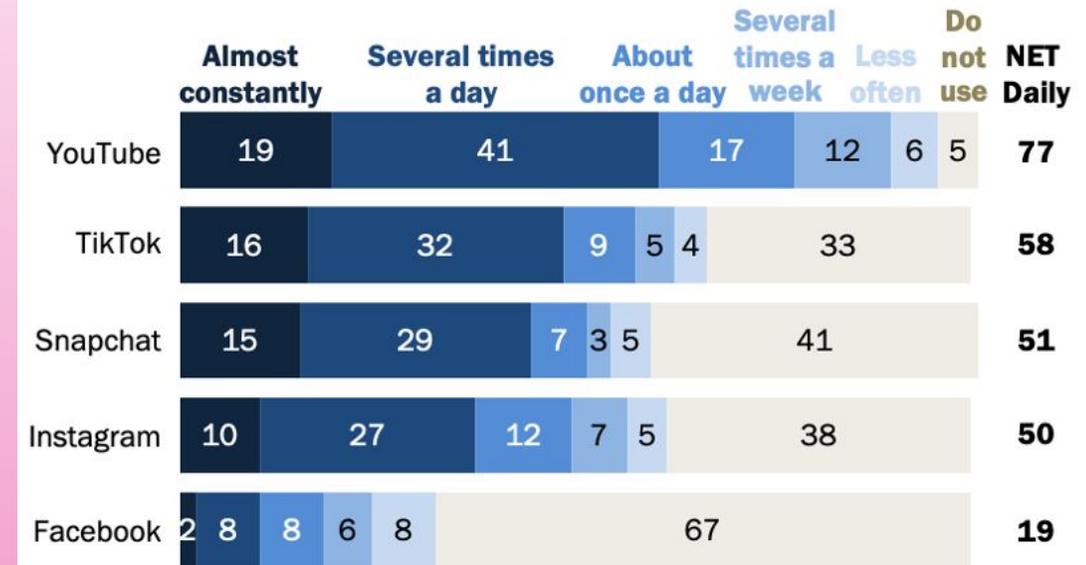
Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown. The 2014-15 survey did not ask about YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitch and Reddit. TikTok debuted globally in 2018.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.
"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Roughly one-in-five teens are almost constantly on YouTube; only 2% say the same for Facebook

% of U.S. teens who say they visit or use each of the following sites or apps ...



Note: Teens refer to those ages 13 to 17. Those who did not give an answer are not shown. Figures may not add up to the NET values due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted April 14-May 4, 2022.

"Teens, Social Media and Technology 2022"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

AND FOR YOUNGER AMERICANS?

- ❖ According to Pew Research Center (2022), Youtube is the most popular SM site amongst teens aged 13-17 by usage reports (95%), followed by TikTok (67%), Instagram (62%) and Snapchat (59%) .
- ❖ Nine out of ten teens age 13-17 use social media platforms, and most (71%) use more than one. There is some data differences based on racial and ethnic identities 81% of Black teens report using TikTok frequently whereas 71% of Hispanic teens and 62% of white teens (Pew Research Center, 2022)
- ❖ 19% of teens report being on Youtube “Almost constantly” while 16% say the same about TikTok and Snapchat (Pew Research Center, 2022)
- ❖ Texting is a preferred method of communication amongst teens many using DMs within apps as a way to do so.
- ❖ There are also gender-based difference in use of social media in general—females use all apps in greater proportion (Pierce, 2009; Pew Research Center, 2022)



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MOTIVES FOR USE

- ❖ Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumer & Gurevich 1974) conceptualizes that all media usage is conscious, goal-directed and intended to meet needs *****
- ❖ Users report motives include meeting social needs, regulating negative emotions, getting positive feedback from others (cited in Wegmann, Oberst, Stodt & Brand, 2017)
- ❖ These social needs include a need to belong, Social group identification, social affiliation, collective self-esteem and keeping in contact with friends (cited in Wegmann, Oberst, Stodt & Brand, 2017)
- ❖ 71% of US Teens report they use SM as a place to show their creative side (Pew Research Center, 2022)



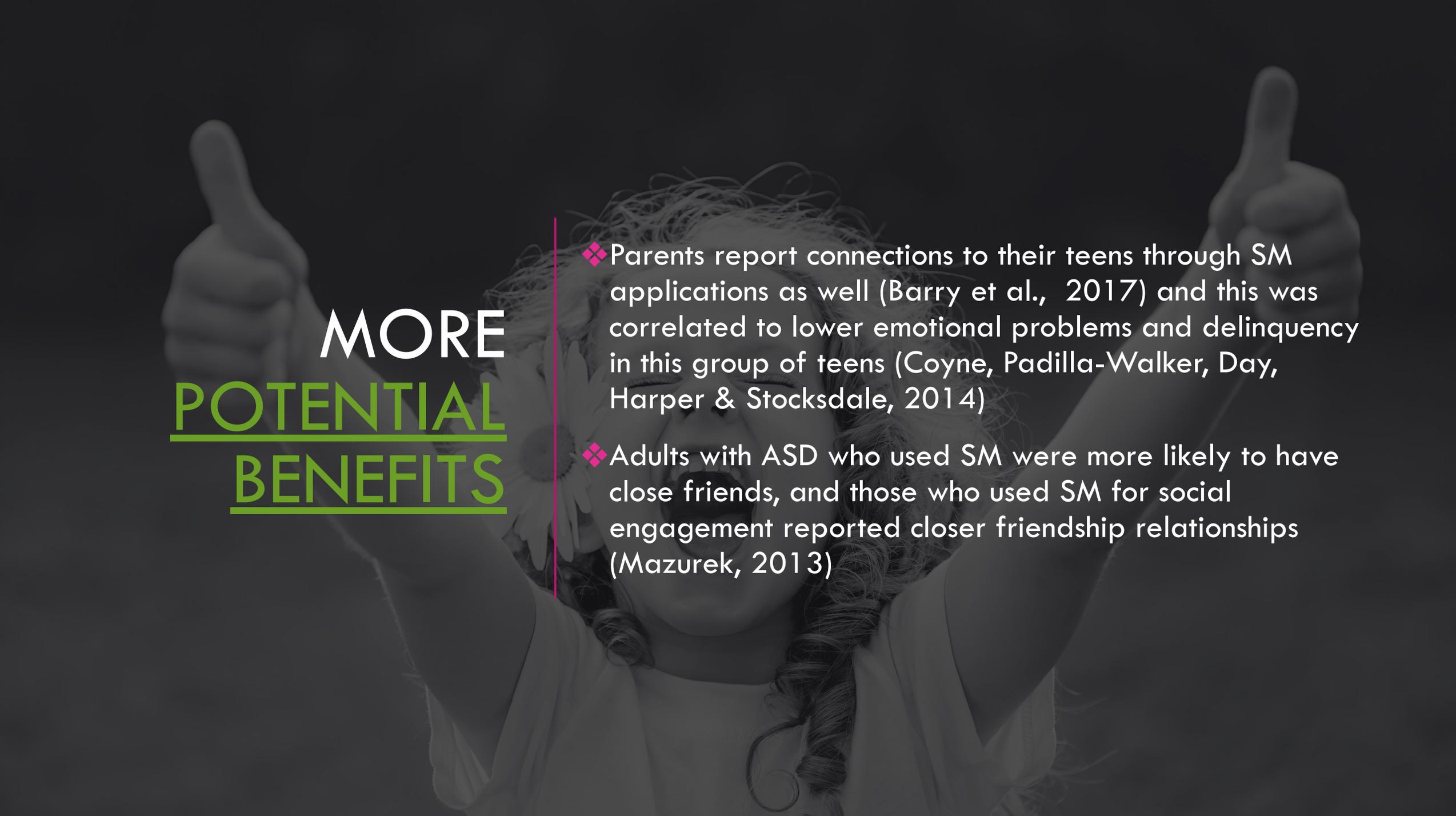
CONTEXT FOR THIS TOPIC

[Sherry Turkle](#)



POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- ❖ Adolescents find social networking sites as an outlet for expressing their thoughts (Akkin et al., 2017) and this is more pronounced for depressed teens
- ❖ Individuals who are shy or who have feelings of anxiety in social situations enjoy the ability to interact with others in a more moderated environment (Ryan & Xenos, 2011)
- ❖ People who lack in person social support may find their niche online (A. Radovic et al. 2017) and to glean resources from other like-minded individuals (Reinke & Solheim, 2015)
- ❖ In adolescents there is a perceived connection to others made noteworthy through the relative ease of social affiliation through SM (Barry et al., 2017)



MORE POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- ❖ Parents report connections to their teens through SM applications as well (Barry et al., 2017) and this was correlated to lower emotional problems and delinquency in this group of teens (Coyne, Padilla-Walker, Day, Harper & Stocksdale, 2014)
- ❖ Adults with ASD who used SM were more likely to have close friends, and those who used SM for social engagement reported closer friendship relationships (Mazurek, 2013)



OH NO.....

SO, WHAT'S THE BAD
NEWS?

AREAS OF CONCERN

For children, teens and young adults, concerns related to SMU take on several themes:

- ❖ Loneliness and depression
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Self-esteem and identity formation
- ❖ Sleep Disturbances
- ❖ Over-use/Impact to functioning
- ❖ Interpersonal impact
- ❖ Propensity for long-standing poor choices



LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION

- ❖ For individuals with pre-existing depression, Pantic et al found that time spent on Facebook and other SM is positively related to depression symptoms on the BDI (2012) ; however, these findings have not been replicated with other more recent studies. There was a link found with depression and “internet addiction” though (Banjanin et al (2015)
- ❖ SM posts often depict the “highlight reel” so viewers might develop feelings of depression, inadequacy and loneliness as a result (Reyes et al. 2018); 23 % of teens surveyed reported feeling worse about their own lives after viewing SM (Pew Research Center, 2023)
- ❖ There is emerging evidence that the timing of SMU might be important—nighttime use may be connected to the development of depression or low-lying mood (Woods & Scott, 2016)

LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION

- ❖ Despite reports that SMU increases social interaction amongst teens and young adults, it does not impact feelings of loneliness. This only comes from face-to-face contact and SMU can contribute to the development of loneliness (Barry et al. 2017)
- ❖ 31% of teens surveyed reported feeling left out due to what their friends are posting online (Pew Research Center, 2023)
- ❖ Compared to their non-depressed peers, depressed adolescents use SM more frequently and in adolescents with suicidal ideation, unmet mental health needs and psychological distress are more frequent users by far (Radovic et al. 2017)

THE NEW KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

- ▼ Fear of Missing Out (FOMO): “a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent...a desire to stay connected to the activities of others (Przybylski et al. 2013, p 1842)

Dear FOMO,

I think of you constantly.



FOMO AND MENTAL HEALTH— WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

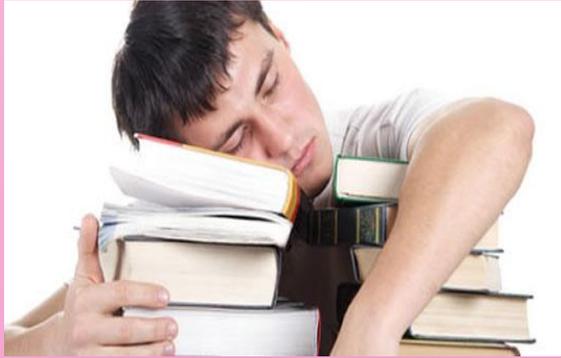
- ✓ Can be seen as a motivating factor for SMU not for connection but to avoid feelings of exclusion (Barry et al. 2017; Wegmann et al. 2017; Pew Research Center, 2022)
- ✓ Scholars have asserted that FoMO might be a dispositional trait that is activated more intensely by increased opportunities to share, connect and compare online (Wegmann et al. 2017)
- ✓ FoMO is linked with increased frequency of SMU (Wegmann et al. 2017) which may be linked to increased negative consequences in other areas of life and its likely to produce a vicious cycle (Beyens et al. 2016)
- ✓ Young adults report significant anxiety when unable to access texts as they worry about missing messages or feeling guilt about not being able to respond immediately (Skierkowski & Woods, 2012)

SELF-ESTEEM AND IDENTITY FORMATION

- ❖ Individuals with high emotional investment in SMU (characterized by feeling upset/anxious & disconnected from others when unable to access text-based communication or SM) are associated with higher levels of anxiety or depression (Woods & Scott, 2016)
- ❖ According to Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten (2006) receiving positive or negative feedback on an online profile can impact self-esteem accordingly (as cited by Woods & Scott, 2016)
- ❖ As an extra complication, findings also indicate that not receiving feedback at all contributes to feelings of stress and can impact self-worth (Beyens, et al. 2016)

SELF-ESTEEM AND IDENTITY FORMATION

- ❖ Frequent Facebook use by adults has been correlated with lower self-esteem due to increased exposure to social comparisons (Vogel, 2014) so it can be argued that teens might be more vulnerable to this
- ❖ Beyens et al. (2016) found that teens with a strong need to belong and for popularity with develop higher levels of FoMO which then translates to increased SM time; 29% of US teens surveyed reported feeling pressure to post content that will get lots of comments (Pew Research Center, 2022)
- ❖ Carefully constructed online postings that emphasize positive qualities contribute to feelings of inadequacy on the part of the viewer which registers as lower self-esteem (Woods & Scott, 2016) ***Social Comparison Theory***



#SLEEPYTEENS

- ❖ Poor sleep quality is already a factor many teens face (Telzer et al. 2013) but studies indicate that night-time SMU exacerbates this issue by decreasing sleep duration, leading to later bedtimes and risetimes & increased daytime sleepiness (Espinoza, 2011; Pantic, 2012; Woods & Scott, 2016)
- ❖ Espinoza surveyed 268 teens and found that about 1/3 reported losing sleep due to SMU (2011)
- ❖ Cell phone usage is also connected here as many teens report sleeping with their phones (86% in one study) so incoming alerts from texts and SM interrupt sleep and this contributes also to FoMO
- ❖ Biomedical studies also indicate concern over digital screen exposure too close to bed interfering with melatonin production and delaying circadian rhythms (Cain & Gradisar, 2010)

“A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME...



Social Media Addiction

- ❖ Not officially classified as a mental disorder but much time is devoted recently in scholarly writings about it
- ❖ Defined as “the irrational and excessive use of social media to the extent that it interferes with other aspects of daily life (Griffiths, 2012)
- ❖ Characterized by being overly concerned about social media and driven by an uncontrollable urge to log on to and use social media (Andreassen & Pallesen, 2014). Like other addictions, use also leads to unfavorable consequences when online social networking becomes uncontrollable and compulsive
- ❖ 54% of US teens surveyed reported that it would be very or somewhat hard to give up SM and 36% of teens report that they spend too much time on SM (Pew Research Center, 2022)
- ❖ Studies have shown that the symptoms of social media addiction can be manifested in mood, cognition, physical and emotional reactions, and interpersonal and psychological problems (Hou et al. 2019)
- ❖ Also referred to as **Social Media Overuse, Social Media Obsession, Problematic Social Media Use**

SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- ❖ Interrupting conversations to check your social media accounts
- ❖ Lying to others about how much time you spend on social media
- ❖ Withdrawal from friends and family
- ❖ Trying to stop or reduce your use of social media more than once before without being successful
- ❖ Loss of interest in other activities
- ❖ Neglecting work or school to comment on Facebook or Twitter account
- ❖ Experiencing withdrawal symptoms when you are not able to access social media
- ❖ Spending over six hours per day on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram
- ❖ Overwhelming need to share things with others on social media sites
- ❖ Having your phone with you 24 hours a day to check your social media sites
- ❖ Using social media more often than you planned
- ❖ Severe nervousness or anxiety when you are not able to check your notifications
- ❖ Negative impacts in your personal or professional life due to social media usage



INTERPERSONAL FUNCTIONING

- ❖ The online diverts time and attention from real-life interpersonal contact
- ❖ Sherry Turkle from MIT describes this phenomena as “Alone Together”
- ❖ Difficult or tense interactions are easier to side-step online
- ❖ Teens and adults alike are more distracted which comes at a high cost
 - ❖ SM use is impacting learning in meaningful ways. Several studies have compared students who texted during a lecture versus those who did not. Those who texted typically took lower quality notes, retained less information, and did worse on tests about the material (Kuznekoff and Titsworth, 2013, Rosen et al, 2011; Lee et al, 2017 all as cited by Harvard University, 2022)

SOCIAL INTERACTION WITH A SIDE OF PORN?

Technology opens up additional avenues and vulnerability

- Exposure to pornography often occurs via the internet (initially on accident) and some statistics report the average age of first exposure as being as young as between 8 and 11 years old (NOVUS, 2016)
- When teens are exposed to porn online, it shapes their expectations for sex in actual life often in problematic ways (DAmour, 2019)
- Ease of interaction and sharing between sexual abuse predators (Zastrow, 2016) as well as ways to find victims beginning with conversing, then moving to seeking contact information, sending graphic content to potential victims and ultimately trying to arrange meetings

Understanding What We Are Up Against...

- Sexting and sextortion are both growing issues related to the use of smartphones

Sextortion

- Stop Sextortion Video

LET'S RECAP

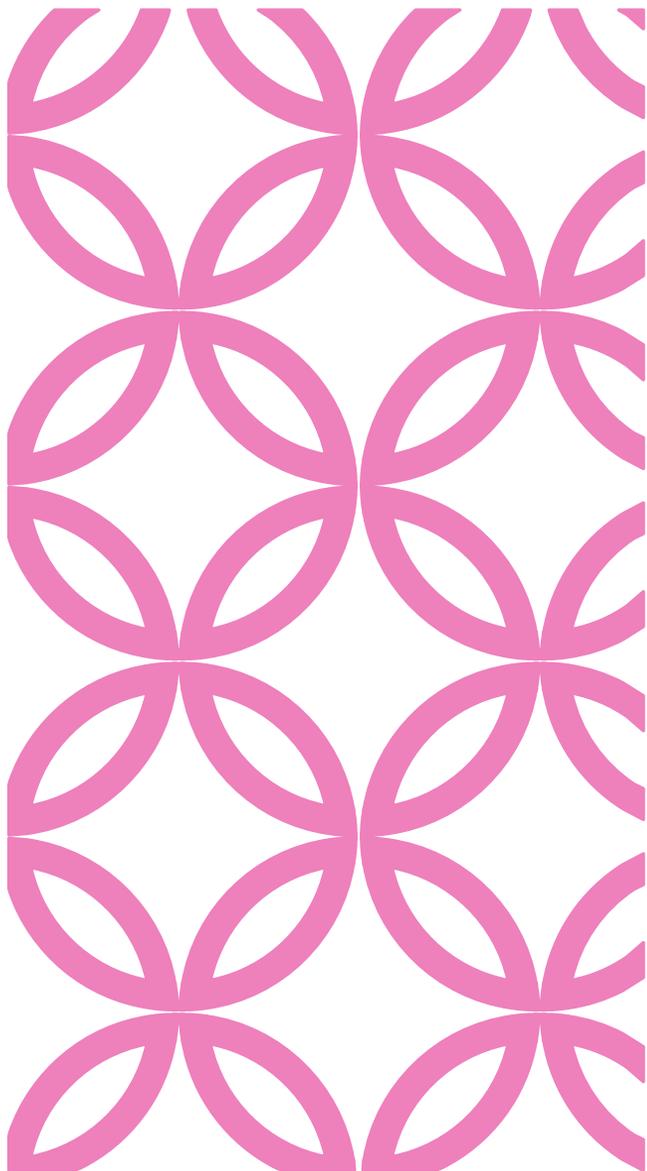
How Does Media Figure Into the Lives of Kids?

Childhood 2.0—a thought-provoking albeit disturbing documentary on this subject

TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY

- ❖ We need to help folks develop media literacy skills: how to evaluate media messages and navigate technology in a mindful way
- ❖ What are some potential ideas here??
 - √ Model moderated use ourselves
 - √ Find ways to teach the value of people over devices
 - √ Device free spaces (like dinner for example)
 - √ Be present and connected in their digital world
 - √ A family online-use plan, with an emphasis on citizenship and healthy behavior.





[Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale](#)

[Parents | REAL Friends Don't \(realfriendsdont.org\)](#)

[FBI resource](#) for reducing sextortion

[Be Your Kid's Safety Net - Thorn for Parents](#)

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

[So, You Need Some Help Tip Sheet \(missingkids.org\)](#)

RESOURCES

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